TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

In This Issue

Allen W. Clark, minister of Calvary Church, Danvers, Mass., has written a short sermon for Rural Life Sunday—Page 1.

In northern New Hampshire, eight Methodist churches are cooperating to care for the people in the surrounding open country. Ralph Grieser, Colebrook, N. H., tells about this R.F.D. service on Page 4.

What seed should the church plant? Alexander Nunn says it needs to plant "the deep-rooted plants of Christianity"—see Pages 5-7. Mr. Nunn is Managing Editor of *The Progressive Farmer* and an active Methodist lay leader.

Where did the Country Church Movement start? George Frederick Wells discusses it on Page 7. Mr. Wells is a retired minister, living at South Hero, Vermont. His second historical article will appear in a fall issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH.

Don Pielstick tells what the Church can do for "the man with the hoe" on Page 8.

On Page 10, Vladimir Hartman discusses ways in which the Church can more effectively serve the rural community. Mr. Hartman is Executive Director of the Washington, D. C., Council of Churches.

Ira W. Moomaw, for many years an agricultural missionary to India, tells about his recent return trip on Page 12.

For Book Reviews—see Pages 14-15.

Marilyn Gilbertson describes a church-centered community on Page 15.

No. 89

May, 1953

Rural Life Sunday Sermonette

HOLBROOK LIBRARY PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

ALLEN W. CLARK

• This is Rogation Sunday—the day on which, from ancient times, men have asked God's blessing on the fruits of the field.

Jesus promises, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my name, he will give it you." Our prayer will be answered if we ask in Jesus' spirit, being willing first to do our part, and asking only what God can wisely give us.

Soil and Souls

The former president of the Kansas Agricultural College once was invited to speak to a gathering of Missouri farmers on soil fertility. Visiting around the community before the meeting, he made soil tests of two adjoining fields. One had been "clean-cultivated" for a generation, while the other had been carefully "cover-cropped," with the green cover-crop ploughed back into the land each year. In the former field, where no nourishment had been ploughed back into the soil, he found that about one-third of the necessary richness had been exhausted. He used this field as an illustration in his talk.

Farming-Suicide

A sour old farmer spoke up: "I know that's my field you were talking about. You say I've used up one-third of its fertility. Well, it has lasted out my lifetime. My son can use up the second third in the next thirty years. Whoever has it after him can look out for himself."

To which the speaker replied, sternly, "The third you have used up is the third that builds and maintains the homes, schools, churches, and roads of the community. The third you say your son will use up is the third that barely sustains life. No man living knows enough to extract the last third out of the soil and stay alive in the process." Most of the farmers present could see that this man's selfishness was farming-suicide, for himself, and for the generations to come.

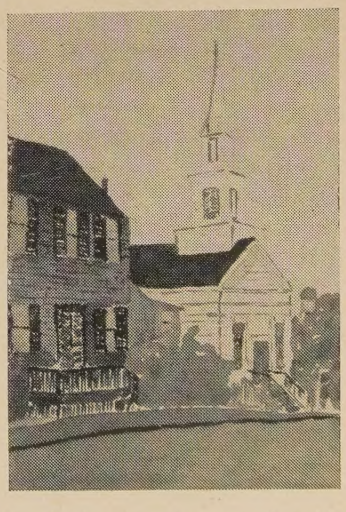
Stewardship

That farmer had missed the main point of farming—that is, if a person believes in God. For God entrusts a precious piece of land to a man, for him to tend for his lifetime; and then to hand on to others, as rich or richer than he found it. He may own the land, in the eyes of the law; but, before God, he is only the steward of it. He holds it in trust for the God who made it and for the unborn generations to come.

Pray and Work

When the farmer asks for God's blessing on the fruits of his land, he must ask it in the name of his master, who taught us our simple duty of stewardship. He must ask it in the spirit that plants the cover-crop each year and ploughs it back into the good earth, and fertilizes and weeds and cares for God's land. If he prays and works in that spirit, God will bless his land over the long years a hundredfold.

Whether you dwell in city streets, or out on a winding country road, it



First Baptist Church, Nantucket, Mass. (courtesy of Marjorie Kenneally)

is the same. Ask God for what you need. Ask it as his intelligent, obedient servant, willing to do your full share. And, as the years slip by, he will bless you unfailingly.

The Fields and Prayer

AARON H. RAPKING

• The alfalfa, oats, wheat and barley fields are green and throbbing with life. Slowly but persistently the buds on the trees are shaping up. All about there is a sense of hope and destiny. The field of waving grain, meadows, the leaves, the beautiful flowers of the dogwood, the red bud, the peach and apple trees are all in the making.

There is new life in action all about me as I meditate on the meaning and significance of the life within all of us. The statements of men of great faith and insight are as refreshing to my soul as showers are to the countryside.

In his very helpful book, "A Call to What is Vital," Rufus M. Jones has this to say about prayer: "Faith is not endangered by the advance of science. It is endangered by the stagnation of religious conceptions. . . . We need to rise to a truer view of God and to a loftier idea of prayer. On the higher religious plane no collision between prayer and science will be found.

"It is literally true that 'more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.' No doubt many a man has come back from his closet where the turmoil of life was hushed and where all the inward currents were set toward God, many of us I say, have come back with a new energy and with cleared vision and we can grasp what before eluded us, we can see farther into the spiritual meaning of any of God's revelations. There is perhaps never a sweep of the soul out into the wider regions of the spiritual world which does not heighten the powers of the person who experiences it.

"The influence of the energy of faith over body conditions goes beyond all usual limits and seems to carry us into the realm of what used to be called 'miracle.' I am compelled to believe that its range is not confined to the body of the person who has the original faith, but it may reach out by a divine telepathy and work extraordinary effects in the lives of others. I have many friends who report to me prayer-effects of an amazing sort, and I am bound to believe their testimony. . . .

"Prayer will always rise or fall with the quality of one's faith. When a man's praying sinks into words, words, words, it means that he is trying to get along with a dead conception of God. He needs to have the fresh sap of living faith in God push off the dead leaves of an outgrown belief, so that once more prayer shall break forth as naturally as buds spring."

Church Rural Youth Award

• In cooperation with the Protestant churches of Kansas, the Town and Country Committee of the state Council of Churches has developed a church-centered program for its Protestant rural youth. The young people are directed to their own church for religious instruction, and those who fulfill the requirements receive the "Church Rural Youth Award."

This is a plan which might well be adopted by other Protestant churches in their programs of religious education. The program is directed by individual pastors. Any boy or girl of Protestant faith who is a registered member of some youth organization—such as the 4-H Club, FFA, Farm Bureau—and under twenty-one years of age may become a candidate for the award.

The program is patterned after the commission plan which was developed by the United Christian Youth Movement. Each boy or girl who participates in the award program will be encouraged to fulfill a number of practical projects that will tie him more closely to the program of religious education and the youth activities of his own church.

Detailed information about this church-centered program for rural youth may be procured from the Kansas Council of Churches, 327 Topeka Avenue, Topeka, Kansas.

World Farmers' Organization

• Thirty-six farm organizations in twenty-eight nations are now affiliated with an International Federation of Agricultural Producers, according to Knowlton Nash, whose report was published in a recent issue of *National Grange Monthly*. He says that these organizations have over 19,000,000 members.

Member organizations from the United States are the National Grange, the Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union, the American Farm Bureau Federation, popularly known as "general" farm organizations, and the National Council of Farm Cooperatives. Offices are maintained in Washington and Paris.

The Federation has been a "warm supporter" of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. "The agricultural cooperative movement is an integral part of I.F.A.P. . . . One of the organization's basic aims is to try to reach stable prices and assured markets for farm products." The Federation is financed by annual subscriptions from the member organizations.

Co-ops Asked to Send Teacher to Silliman

• The Cooperative League of the U.S.A. is trying to raise funds among U.S. cooperatives to enable a trained person from the U.S. to give courses at Silliman University in the Philippines. Silliman receives support from Presbyterian and Congregational boards of missions.

If the means are secured, a U.S. worker will train Philippine residents with the special aim of building rural co-ops. The Philippine government is encouraging the proposal.

—COOPERATIVE NEWS SERVICE

Next Issue

• The next issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH will be dated September 1953. We do not publish during June, July or August.

Seminar on Farmer and Government

• About fifty-five persons attended an informal seminar on "The Christian Farmer and His Government," organized by the Department of the Church and Economic Life of the National Council of Churches, February 10-12, in Washington, D. C. The seminar has been held annually with the cooperation of denominational departments of social education and action and of the town and country church. Each individual participating makes his own inquiries. It is a study group with no resolutions or findings.

Ray Miller of F.A.O. again showed some forty of his 4,000 colored slides on rural conditions and projects throughout the world. The slides get better year by year, and this year's presentation was altogether the best teaching I have ever heard that good teacher, Ray Miller, do. In a few moments he showed what Technical Assistance, or Technical Cooperation, or Point Four, means in the lives of people who live under relatively primitive conditions of agriculture. You see the change before your eyes, and best of all you see what mutual aid along with a small amount of money can accomplish.

Walter Wilcox of the Library of Congress gave an orientation talk. Representatives of the Grange, Farmers' Union, Farm Bureau and of cooperatives explained their programs. Informal meetings were had with members of the committees on Agriculture of both Houses. In the House Committee room, Representative Clifford Hope of Kansas, the Chairman, gave us an excellent review of farm programs, and of the many-sided character of farm policy today. In the Senate, Senators Schoeppel of Kansas and Hoey of North Carolina discussed the pending business there. Senator Humphrey of Minnesota discussed migrant labor and made keen observations on foreign policy and on the public statements of generals versus their private statements.

At the Department of Agriculture, we again had a thorough session. Ezra T. Benson, the Secretary, was speaking in the Northwest on beef and wheat prices the morning we called. His able associates gave us a warm welcome. We met some of the new and some of the older public servants in the Department.

It is probable that this seminar will be held annually, as it has been for some years, and that next year's session will be the first week of February. If you want to attend, write in the fall to your denominational social education or town and country secretary, or to the Rev. Cameron P. Hall of the National Council of Churches.

The seminar is open both to farm operators, and to ministers and church officials.

—Benson Y. Landis

Rural Life Sunday, May 10, 1953

• Rural Life Sunday will again be observed on Rogation Sunday, the fifth Sunday after Easter, May 10.

This year's order of service was prepared by C. R. McBride, Central Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Kansas.

Copies may be obtained from your cooperating home mission board or from the Department of Publication and Distribution, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 120 East 23rd Street, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5 cents each; 100 copies or more, $2.60 for each 100 copies. Carriage extra on quantity orders.

Photo by Eva Luoma

The Church's R.F.D.

RALPH GRIESER

• Since the beginning of the century, nearly half the post offices in the United States have been closed. The automobile and the rural free delivery service have made it possible for half the former number of post offices to handle the increasing volume of the nation's mail and do it well.

Open-Country Churches

By comparison, we see that only one of these factors is common to both the post office and the church. That is the automobile. Only the post office developed the R.F.D. While the country church destroyed its horse sheds and hitching posts, and waited for cars which did not arrive, the Post Office Department laid out rural routes. The postman has gone to the people, but the church has written a shameful chapter which might be entitled "No R.F.D."

The church, however, is beginning to see that "the least of these" may mean the family farthest from the church building. Pastors are out on the road with snow and mud treads, calling from house to house.

Group Ministry

The service rendered at Colebrook, New Hampshire is an illustration of what can be done to reach the people in the open country. In the Parish of the Headwaters, where the Connecticut River rises, we are finding that a group ministry, in which eight Methodist churches cooperate, is helping the churches to carry on an extension program. Buses are being used. A parish worker is going into the smallest places to organize week-day classes and Sunday schools. With a portable organ and portable visual aid equipment she is able at the shortest notice to respond to invitations "to be the program" for community meetings. A chain of extension vacation Bible schools, each with a neighborhood staff, meets in Grange halls and school houses. Men's and women's societies meet in homes, including outpost homes. Teams of lay-visitors are going up this road and down that. And good religious books are being circulated among the remote families.

The Way it Started

You may ask, "How did this change take place in Colebrook?" The initiative was taken by several people. First of all, there was Chester D. Noyes, a dairy farmer living five miles out and a lay leader of the church, who felt that children in three of the back-country neighborhoods ought to have religious instruction. Churches once functioning in these neighborhoods had long been abandoned and parents as well as children had been out of touch with the church for many years.

Mr. Noyes persuaded the Colebrook church to allow him to launch a free bus program to bring children to the church on Sunday morning. This enabled us to increase our Sunday school attendance from fifty to eighty. Now after four years of this service, the average attendance is 135. The local church, raising nearly a thousand dollars a year for the bus service, has come to be known as the church which cares for all its people.

Then, a pastor who spends his summers here persuaded Bishop John Wesley Lord and the Methodist Board of Missions to make a survey of the area. The Women's Division sent a full-time rural worker and the Board of Missions also came to the aid of the project. This was the start of a group ministry, including three charges and eight churches. The Colebrook people saw the wisdom of the plan and were delighted that the director of the group ministry would be their pastor.

With a full staff, including a rural worker, the Colebrook church has defined its field and extended its ministry. Summer vacation Bible schools go right out to the people; outdoor services are held in the smallest places; Sunday evening services go to the people, also. As a result of the town church's friendliness, forty-five adults have come for Christian baptism within the past two months.

Our interpretation of "R.F.D." services is to take the Gospel into the countryside, to establish schools for children, and to refer people to their nearest church for fellowship. When they find that they are really wanted they take their place in the life of the church.

Child Labor in 1951-1952

• In October, 1951, according to the 1952 report of the National Child Labor Committee, 2,344,000 children and young people under 18 years of age were working, full or part-time. Of these, 1,582,000 were in the 16 to 17 age group and 762,000 were 14 to 15 years old. About 95 per cent of the younger children were in school and 75 per cent of the older ones.

About 15 per cent of all in the younger age bracket in school were working. More than a third of them were working in agriculture, about half of them classified as unpaid family workers. About 104,000 who were not in school were working; again the majority were unpaid workers on the home farm. Almost a third of the 16 and 17 year olds in school were employed (948,000); about a quarter of them in agriculture. There were 634,000 who were working and were not in school. About a third of these were in agriculture. More than a half a million in the two age brackets were neither in school nor employed. These, the Child Labor Committee notes, "constitute the school drop-out problem. This group presents a great challenge to educational planners."

The agricultural provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act apply only to workers in commercialized agriculture, not to the children of sharecroppers or tenants. Yet they "are in a very real sense part of the agricultural labor force," even though they are working for their parents. Of the workers in non-agricultural industries about three-quarters are in wholesale and retail trade and services.

Town & Country Church

Published monthly (except June, July, August) by the Department of Town and Country Church, Division of Home Missions, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

15c a copy; One Dollar a Year

Publication Office: Tenth and Scull Streets, Lebanon, Pa.

Editorial Office: 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Lebanon, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Board of Editors

The following persons with responsibility for town and country church work in the religious bodies constitute the *Board of Editors:*

George P. Kerr, United Presbyterian Church. Chairman of the Department of Town and Country Church.

Alice Maloney, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Vice-Chairman of the Department of Town and Country Church.

Benjamin H. Cain, Evangelical United Brethren.

James M. Carr, The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.

Joseph Heartberg, American Baptist Home Mission Society.

Karl S. Henry, Board of American Missions, United Lutheran Church in America.

Dale W. Medearis, United Christian Missionary Society, Disciples of Christ.

Henry S. Randolph, Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Clifford L. Samuelson, Division of Domestic Missions, National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Glenn F. Sanford, Board of Missions and Church Extension, the Methodist Church.

Claude J. Snyder, Board of National Missions, Evangelical and Reformed Church.

Thomas Alfred Tripp, Board of Home Missions, Congregational Christian Churches.

Edward K. Ziegler, Church of the Brethren.

Don F. Pielstick, Executive Director, Department of the Town and Country Church.

Benson Y. Landis, Consultant.

Ruth B. Robinson, Editor.

Crops the Church Should Plant

ALEXANDER NUNN

• Throughout the country, more and more churches are observing Rural Life Sunday. The first Rural Life Sunday, I like to think, Jesus himself started more than 1900 years ago. Perhaps it began when shepherds heard the glad tidings of his birth. It may have been the Sabbath that He was upbraided by the Pharisees for walking with His disciples through the wheat fields and plucking the heads of ripe grain to eat. Perhaps it began from one of His many periods of teaching the multitudes in the open countryside:

"A sower went out to sow his seed; and some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundred fold." Luke 8:5-8.

"What is the Kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his garden; and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches." Luke 13:18-19.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5. (And who but country folks would know so vividly and so clearly how quickly a branch dies, once it loses its union with the vine?)

"I am the good shepherd, I know my own and my own know me." John 10:15. "Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush." Luke 6:44.

Perhaps it came from that most scathing of all indictments of those who live for self alone, who know not the meaning of good stewardship, whether of talents or time or money or other resources. "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Luke 12:16-21.

Farmers Understand Him

We as farm folks have never quite realized how much a man of the country and of the small towns Jesus was. If there are any country folks who can't understand the four gospels they'll never understand the rest of the Bible. If there are ministers concerned over methods of reaching farm congregations, I trust the solution will not seem too easy: Follow Jesus' example.

If Jesus were with us in the flesh today, I wonder if He would not be teaching and leading us by drawing His illustrations and His parables from the simple things that we daily pass by or take for granted or ignore. "Break up your fallow ground," I seem to hear Him quoting Hosea, "for it is time to seek the Lord." Will you give God a chance?

Year 'Round Religion

What crops would He tell us to plant on those acres that have lain idle? Everybody is talking year-round grazing and crops to be planted to provide it. Don't we as professing Christians today, of all people, need to concern ourselves with year-round grazing? We have come to believe very emphatically that to be successful livestock growers we must have plenty for our animals to eat every day and every month of the year. We want to keep them growing and gaining. Are we as concerned about human growth? How often do we still think that a week's revival in a year is all the evangelistic food that we can stand? How many of our churches and church leaders still look on their work as something to be done on Sunday and then it's finished until the next Sunday? No longer, it seems to me, do we think so callously and so piously that Sun-

day religion and weekday religion have nothing in common. We're more honest with ourselves and with the Lord, I think, than we used to be. But we must put more effort into planting crops that feed and nurture Christian character day after day and season after season throughout the year. We've got to come to the time when we fully take our religion into all of our living, whether it be on the seat of a tractor, behind the desk of a businessman or in the homemaker's workshop, her kitchen.

Surviving Hard Times

In this program of year-round grazing, we need to be planting more acres to the alfalfas, the fescues, the sericeas, the kudzus, the blue grammas, the deep-rooted plants of Christian living. If our convictions and our experiences are not deep-rooted in Christ, how are we to survive the droughts that move in on us? How else are we to tap those unknown and unused sources of Christian power? Are not the shallow-rooted plants today "having no depth of earth in themselves" those who have forgotten that God still lives, that He still rules, and that Christianity can triumph over all the isms that plague us? I can imagine that Jesus in talking about year-round grazing would not overlook the chance to stress a continuous spirit of evangelism. He would be asking us if we were full enough of Christian experience to want to tell others about it; if there was something about us to make others say, "He has something I haven't that I want too." A publisher friend of mine put it rather tersely I thought in talking to a group of businessmen: "We cannot preserve our democracy; we cannot preserve our education; we cannot preserve our religion, unless we're willing to give them to others."

Jesus, I think, would not overlook the chance to talk to us about crops that fit into an all-farm plan for the church. We in Southern agriculture have come to accept the all-farm plan as the soundest method of putting all a man's acres to work producing an income. The church has hill lands, swamp lands, poor lands, rich lands, red lands, sandy lands, lands in dry and wet areas, lands in hot and cold climates. Yes, of course, you say, I know that, but what of it? Would the same plants and the same fertilizer, the same cultivation and harvest methods fit every acre? Of course not. Some of the acres may grow pine trees best, some clover pastures, some wheat, others cotton. There are country churches, First churches, county-seat churches, and mill churches. Aren't we still trying too much to believe that the same crops grow equally well in all? That all will respond equally well to the same treatment? And yet they are all a part of the same farm. Jesus would condemn us, not that our acres were poor, or that they weren't all level, but that we've failed to put every acre to work doing the things for which it is best suited. He would condemn us for trying to make every acre in this church of ours grow the same crops. Jesus never condemned the one-talent man for having but one talent. The man condemned himself for not putting to work that talent which he had. We believe with Paul that we are all one body in Christ but we don't follow as readily his further analogy that all have not the same office or that the eyes cannot say I have no need of the teeth, or the teeth that I have no need for the feet.

Seed Bed of Our Faith

An all-farm church plan would recognize that saving the soil is both a foundation and an expected outcome of all else that is done. How else do we save lowland farms along the river's banks unless we first protect those farms hundreds or thousands of miles away high up on the tiny branches and creeks where the river begins? The floods and the mud that ruin verdant green crops in the lowlands, the floods that often turn the lowlands into waste acres, didn't start there. How can we save society unless we save the home? If its homes are not sound, if they do not build character, we know that society will decay. How do we save First church in the city unless we save Wesley's Chapel, Bethel, Mt. Olive and Macedonia? We know that the flow of population has been from the open country to the towns and cities. The church cannot afford to pass lightly by the farm family or the family-type farm, if it wishes to survive. "Character like corn," said Henry Grady, "is dug from the soil."

From crops and livestock with hybrid vigor so important in our economic life today I can visualize other lessons that Jesus might draw.

American corn growers, using old standard varieties, could make creditable yields. Then along came hybrids, developed by crossing entirely different lines to boost yields to levels America had never dreamed of before. As hybrids depend on the crossing of self-fed lines, Christian advance may depend on the crossing of selfless lines. Must we continue always our standard patterns of thinking in Christian social relations? Is it not time for new ideas with hybrid vigor? Is a "liberal" within the church always to be a person who takes only the side of labor or of minorities? Can one who thinks of himself as a liberal never become it? Must a conservative always take the side of business or the upper classes? Is not the idea with the greatest vigor of all, "What would Jesus do?" "What would Jesus say?"

Facing the Issues

The church has never needed worse than it needs today a vigorous, unflinching willingness to face social issues. I shall not soon forget the speaker at the World Ecumenical Conference of Methodism in Oxford, England, last summer, who said, "The church that weds itself to the social standards of its day will find itself a widow in the next." Yet the church has never needed less the narrow thinking that arrogates to itself all final authority to settle social issues by its own standards rather than Christ's standards.

The church needs ideas with hybrid vigor that will get us away from the deadly sin of thinking that techniques which worked in a pioneer society will all fit today's modern world. Man, today, I am convinced, is not less interested in Christ. But the approach to his spiritual self has changed as surely as he has changed from horse and buggy to motor car and airplane. "No one who puts his

hand to the plow and looks back," said Jesus, "is fit for the kingdom of God."

Does the church not need to be planting seeds of hybrid vigor in helping men and women to face world issues today? Can America save itself unless it saves others? We cannot claim the name of Christ and continue to believe that the welfare of our own family and our own state and nation are all that matter.

We in farming plant for crops that we may harvest two months, six months, perhaps a year hence. We look for harvests that are soon used up and gone. The church's great mission is to plant crops that last. Jesus said to the multitudes that followed him, "You seek me . . . because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life . . . I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst."

Are we planting for harvests that last?

—Reprinted, with permission, from *The Methodist Layman,* 740 Rush Street, Chicago 11, Ill.

Rural Life Sunday Prayer

• Our Father: Thy works are so great and ours are so small. "What is man that thou art mindful of him?"

In this hour may we feed our minds upon the choice morsels of truth which thy son bequeathed to us, out of life in the fields and flocks of Judea.

In this hour may we feed our spirits upon the memory of those dedicated saints who walked the highway and lived as neighbors when we were children.

In this hour may we feed our bodies upon the labor of our hands and the fruit of thy soil, whereby thy loving kindness is revealed to us and to our children.

In this glad hour may we feed our emotions upon the sweet communion of prayer. Hear us so that our lives shall reveal thy mission for us tomorrow and every day.

—James D. Wyker

Origin of the Country Church Movement

GEORGE FREDERICK WELLS

• Did the American Country Church Movement begin in New England?

The first person to whom I put this question replied, "You ought to know!" The answer pleased my ego but did not satisfy my intellect, for if I had known the answer I would not have asked the question. Do we not all need and want to know where, when, and by whom the country church movement had its origin?

So the question was asked again, this time of a country minister past three score years and ten, who had shared in the real movement.

"Yes," said he, "Malcolm Dana was in Connecticut when he organized the Larger Parish Plan into a real movement. Strange, isn't it," he continued, "that Dana began his career as a city minister and yet started the country church movement?"

Did he?

The next person to be interviewed as to the possible New England origin of the country church movement was a man of years, a sociologist, and a historian.

"Yes," said he, "I think you will find the origin of the movement in New England."

Born and reared in Vermont I have great faith in New England resourcefulness. And, having had a share in the country church movement on local, state and national levels, and some active relationships since the beginning of the century, I believe that the country church movement in America does owe much to New England influences.

A recognized rural sociologist, author of a text book on the subject, and a denominational leader of rural church work for many years was the next man I approached.

"No," he replied, "the country church movement began with Warren H. Wilson and Edmund de S. Brunner who first applied the methods of scientific sociology to the study of the community, as affected by the Church."

A few weeks later I attended a country church convention outside New England. One of the speakers was a university professor, a sociologist, and a leader of ability. "When and where did the American Country Church Movement have its origin?" I ventured. "With Liberty Hyde Bailey, Kenyon L. Butterfield, and Warren H. Wilson," was the answer.

"The country church movement," wrote Charles Josiah Galpin in a personal letter, "got its impetus from the Country Life Commission of President Theodore Roosevelt and through the surveys, genius, and devotion of Warren H. Wilson, Presbyterian rural pilot."

Twenty or more years ago many of us began to realize that there might possibly be a movement before the movement which seemed to be dated by the Roosevelt Commission.

In 1921 Professor Dwight Sanderson, sociologist of the New York State College of Agriculture, wrote, "As to when the country church movement originated depends on just what you mean by it, but my impression is that it received its chief impetus in this country through the work of Warren H. Wilson."

"I feel that the true country life movement did not get under way until it was fairly common to teach rural sociology in the colleges of the United States," writes a professor of economics at the University of Vermont. Likewise the more mature country church movement was not realized until our theological seminaries had country church professorships.

It is very probable that the country life movement began with the application of the scientific methods of sociology to country community resources and life. But the religious phases of the movement were not so dependent upon sociology.

The above discussion has gone far enough. And so I am preparing a brief history of the New England part of the country church movement for a fall issue of Town and Country Church.

The Fields of the Spirit

DON F. PIELSTICK

> O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
> How will the Future reckon with this Man?
>
> —EDWIN MARKHAM

• The accusation that the Protestant Church is a middle-class institution has some truth in it, but close examination may reveal that the root of this truth is anchored in soil of different texture from that which the accusers have in mind. For is it not the main purpose of the Protestant Church to so present its faith and works that the downtrodden and unseeing people of the world are redeemed through God's remedial grace? Let us look for a moment at the Christian faith and the middle-class farmer.

The Man With The Hoe, Oil painting by Jean Francois Millet.
(Collection of Mr. W. W. Crocker, San Francisc

Raising the Sights

The first thing the Christian faith brings to a person is a sense of his own dignity. His worth can be measured only by the Creator through whose mercy he was brought into being. With this realization of dignity and worth, there also dawns a sense of the mystery and purpose of life. Why did God create him, he asks. Then follows the desire to fulfill the divine plan for his life. Slowly his eyes are filled with a new light, his back is straightened and his shoulders are thrown back. For the first time in his life he begins to understand the ways of nature and his fellow men, the latent potentialities in both, and in himself.

Essential Conditions

I will not enter into any debate as to how this comes about—whether through revelation or divine redemption. But the man whose sights have been raised, if he be a farmer, is on his way to becoming a middle-class citizen, provided the right conditions are present. A few of these essentials are an abundance of natural resources, access to scientific knowledge as it applies to farming, a civic government which upholds his right to the fruits of his labors and an opportunity to make a just exchange of money for them.

The Christian faith also brings to a person a realization of his failure to live as a person of dignity and worth should live and consciousness of the fact that his relations with his fellow men have failed to convey this concept. At this time Christian humility is born. No longer does the fire of hatred flare at injustice and social wrong. In its place is a forgiving understanding of human frailties. The newly-awakened man is not so eager to try to remake society after the desires of his own heart—he knows how corrupt his desires can be. But his recently-found Christian faith motivates him to live and to invite others to live in such a way that this dignity and worth cannot be denied.

Space is too limited for me to discuss the economic aspects of this attribute of the Christian faith. I believe that it is the basis for a cooperative economy.

Forgiveness

Another result of Christian faith is a consciousness of the forgiveness of God—forgiveness of man's inability to realize the full value of his latent potentialities; forgiveness for a social behavior that has not helped others to develop their potentialities. And because the nature of forgiveness is constructive, he tries again and again to live the Christ-like life. Who will deny that such a spirit is essential to achievement?

"The man with the hoe" should be the concern of every Christian. In him are latent potentialities which can be dangerous "when winds of rebellion shake the world." Or, redeemed by the Christian faith, he may become an honored member of the Church and community.

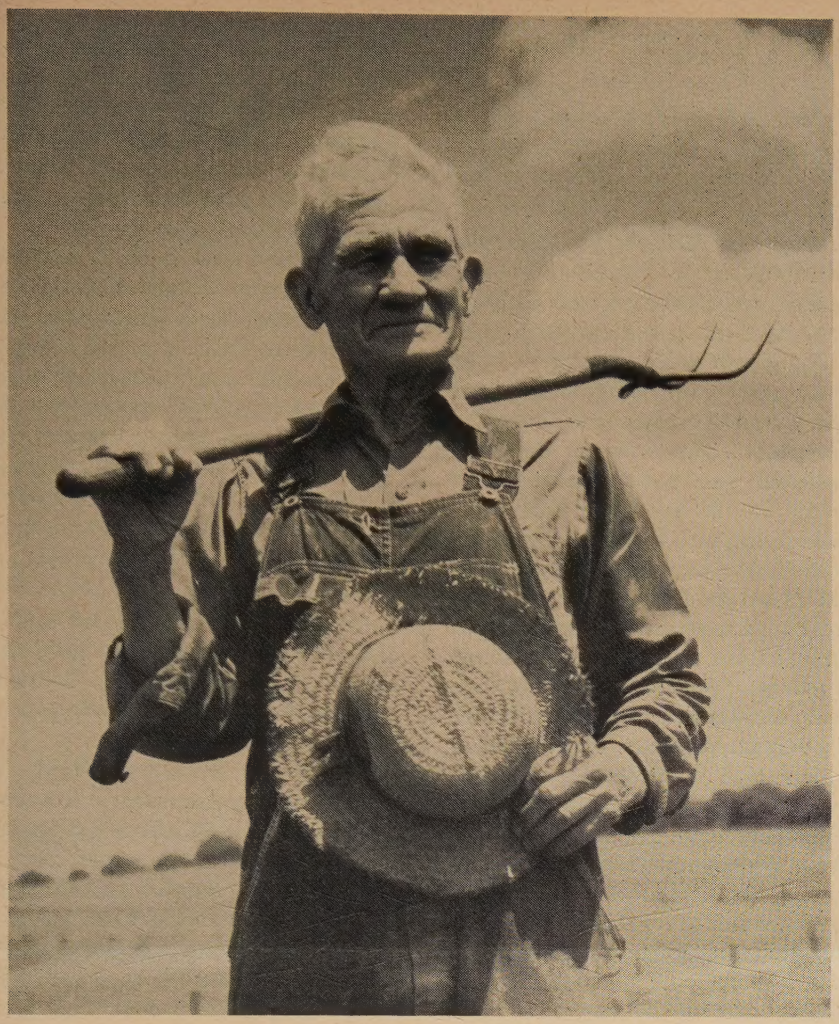


Photo by Eva Luoma

Young Farmer

LIBERTY HYDE BAILEY

He shall go out to the far green hills
And he shall go out on the mains
He shall go north 'long the rock-bound kills
And he shall go south on the plains.

He shall go out to the desert reach
Where the dead winds gather the sands,
He shall go on where the waters breach
Far down in their weltering lands.

He shall go forth in the winter's rage
And away in the tropic fire
And there he shall stand; nor fame nor wage
Shall defeat him of his desire.

For he shall build on the good stout earth
That he takes from the hand of God,
And grip his place with a free man's girth
And shall strike his fires from the clod.

No nature-doubts shall haunt him to fear,
Storm and calm shall he walk with her—
Together joined in the rolling year
Where elemental pulses stir.

Temples shall rise on the land he smites
Visions turn with his good plow-beam,
For steadfastly on through days and nights
There shall rest on his face the Dream.

—Published in the author's book of poems, *Wind and Weather.* Reprinted with permission of the author's family.

The Christian Farmer

• The Methodist Town and Country Commission, in cooperation with the Board of Lay Activities and the Methodist Rural Fellowship of the California-Nevada Conference of The Methodist Church, has issued a discussion guide entitled, "What Does it Mean to be a Christian Farmer?" The guide is published with the hope that it may stimulate other groups of farmers in local communities to come together for similar exploration. It presents for discussion the basic stewardship principles and their application.

The "Discussion Guide on What Does it Mean to be a Christian Farmer?" may be procured from the Rev. Ray F. Magnuson, Route 1, Box 220, Yuba City, California, for 10 cents per copy.

Robert Frost Receives Fellowship

• Robert Frost, four-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, has received the 1953 Fellowship of the Academy of American Poets. The award carries a stipend of $5,000 for one year and is made annually to an American who has distinguished himself in poetry.

Texas Farmers

• In accordance with the Scriptures, a group of Texas farmers near Abernathy dedicated a tenth of their land last spring, and brought their tithes to the church in the fall. What they brought filled two washtubs with $14,132.65 in cash and checks.

The Rural Church and its Opportunity of Service

VLADIMIR E. HARTMAN

• Often we speak of the rural church movement as being something new. When we do this we negate a heritage which is dramatic and inspiring. The church which ministered to the pioneer on the successive frontiers in this country was a rural church. The churches which adapted their programs to the challenge and need of the frontier were the ones that were vital and did much to generate grass roots democracy.

So when we speak about our rural communities in America—in the East, in the South, in the North, in the Middle West, or the Far West—we refer to the basic institutions which are common to each: the family, the school and the church. Whatever our rural communities may be, the church has been one of the influences which has been ever present.

The Challenge

For many years now the rural church has been under a critical analysis, both from objective social scientists, and from the leaders of the church itself. In 1909 the formal Country Life Movement was launched with the report of the Roosevelt Country Life Commission. Theodore Roosevelt and the men who worked with him were keen to appreciate the importance of strong, healthy rural communities. They realized that there was an agrarian illness in America.

This report delivered a direct challenge to the country church to reorganize and revitalize its ministry to the rural people. To this challenge the church responded, the Presbyterians first, the Moravians second, and the Methodists third. These denominations created departments or commissions to deal with the problems of the rural church. Today, almost all of the denominations have Town and Country Departments, and through these they are attempting to find solutions to their problems.

Warren H. Wilson was the first superintendent of Church and Country Life for the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Within three months after the Roosevelt report, Warren H. Wilson was conducting a series of country church conferences. To these conferences there was an eager response. He was both surprised and pleased by the intelligent and enthusiastic interest in the church manifested by the teachers and scientific thinkers in the Department of Agriculture and the agricultural colleges.

Dr. Wilson later said of those early days: "For five years we just talked, discussed, or propagandized; and everywhere I met two classes of men who had equal zeal for a revival of the country church. They were the deans of agriculture and the supervisors of churches. We agreed in believing that the aroused and angry farmer would not prosper economically, nor win political victory that would last until he had schools and churches capable of registering his culture and transmitting it from one generation to the next."

Measuring Rod

From 1910-1915 Wilson made rural chuch surveys in nine states. At the same time, surveys were also being made by C. O. Gill and Gifford Pinchot. After the first World War, the Inter-Church World Movement continued the surveys, and following its collapse, there was organized the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys, which completed the nationwide study of the church in its social and economic setting.

In these early years of the rural life movement, courses in rural sociology were being offered for the first time. Of these rural sociologists, none saw more clearly its relationship to the community than did C. J. Galpin. He was interested in such problems as the relation of the rural church to agriculture, to farm tenancy, the problems of overcrowding and competition, the resident minister, reparishing, training schools for ministers and denominational cooperation. He felt that a strong church which was properly located and had a capable resident minister could do much to unify agriculture; a unified agriculture would in turn nurture the church.

We now know a great deal more about the rural church and the interaction between it and other rural institutions. We are well aware of the movement of millions of our rural people to urban centers. We have seen the disappearance of open country stores and we have watched the consolidation of country schools take place at a rapid rate.

Correlation

In times past the school and the church have been the nucleating centers of community life. With the improvement in transportation and communication, community boundaries have expanded. With this change in the community, the school and the store have often disappeared, but in most cases people are still meeting in the neighborhood church. Here is an intimate form of social organization with primary face to face contacts. Here is an organization which the people feel belongs to them. The church is representative somewhat of the assistance, sympathy and loyalty between people of local groups who feel that they belong together and need each other.

But the rural churches are failing to achieve their maximum efficiency. Several reasons may be advanced for this: Lack of well-trained resident ministers, small salaries which necessitate a minister serving several churches or subsidizing his income by other work, poor church buildings, no well-rounded community program, lack of cooperation with other oragnizations, overcrowding and competition among the churches and lack of agreement among denominations as to parish boundaries. Too often the church gives no evidence that it has accepted the problems of soil conservation, health, recreation, and education as part of its responsibility.

What then are the opportunities which the rural church has of being of service to the rural community? I

would like to discuss three ways in which the church can more effectively serve the rural community.

First, the rural church can serve the rural community by conserving and enriching the resources of community life. In every rural community there are three kinds of resources: natural, human and spiritual. While we separate them for analysis they are inter-related and inter-dependent. Fascinating indeed is the story of how life grows upon this earth.

The precious top soil which sustains the life of all men has been produced through the centuries by the interaction of living things on the earth's crust with air, water, rock and sunshine. Without the soil there would be no life. As soil is enriched, the life dependent on it is improved; as soil becomes weak, life is enervated. The soil thus is the common mooring for all mankind.

Soil and Souls

Man has taken from the earth without replacing. He has failed to see this relationship between soil erosion and soul erosion and has thus victimized himself by disregarding the relationship between God, man, and the land. When the soil has wasted away, man is no longer able to eke out a living but is forced to move away. The foundations of the home, the school and the church crumble because of man's poor stewardship.

But the church today has a message that life is one, that life and the social welfare of man is tied up with all of creation and that man has a responsibility to it. The rural church can and should proclaim the message of man's responsibility to the earth. It should teach that the earth is holy and that it belongs to God for the use and enrichment of all mankind. Man is but a steward who should leave it better than he found it.

The Church's Responsibility

In the second place, the rural church can serve the rural community by developing leadership. The church must ever recognize the home as the primary institution, since it is the early years in the life of the child which are formative and of cardinal importance. The rural church has a unique opportunity in making a contribution to the totality of our society in that the rural areas are the seed beds of population. Cities are not friendly to the raising of children.

Further, the church has a responsibility to train young men and young women for rural religious work.

A third way in which the rural church can serve the rural community is by helping to create a community of interests. The people who make up the community are bound together by many bonds and ties as they work together to meet their common needs and problems. The institution which does not serve the needs of the people and create those community bonds has no claim to the support of the people. This is as true for the church as it is for the school or any organized club. The church which does not serve has no claim to perpetuity.

How then can the church help create this community of interests? It can do it by making religion a motivating force for all of life and not for one segment only. It can do it by helping man to see that all of life is sacred and of infinite worth. It can do it by emphasizing the importance and balance of those things by which men live: work, play, love, and worship. Many rural churches have died because they have defined their function too narrowly.

—Reprinted from
Mountain Life and Work

"The Spiritual Aspects of Play"

• "There is a Christian doctrine of play, and it is tied up with the Christian doctrine of work," said the Right Reverend Stephen Bayne, Jr., at the recent National Recreation Congress. Part of Bishop Bayne's address appeared in the January, 1953 issue of *Recreation,* periodical of the National Recreation Association.

Bishop Bayne believes that "work and play belong together . . . that without the relaxation of play, man will break . . . that it exists to serve the wholeness and the singleness of life."

The 1953 Convocation

• The tenth National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country will be held this year at Saint Paul, Minnesota, October 27-29.

The Convocation is held annually under the auspices of The Department of the Town and Country Church of the Division of Home Missions, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

The conference brings together those most interested in the rural church for exchange of ideas on new techniques. They worship together, inspire and educate each other, and make plans and recommendations as they confront the rural community.

Ministers of town and country churches, church administrators, officers of rural community agencies, and all others who are interested in the town and country church are cordially invited to attend this year's Convocation.

The program of the 1953 Convocation and detailed information regarding registration and housing will be published in the September issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. Many of the denominational home mission boards will distribute programs.

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Rural Missions in the Far East

IRA W. MOOMAW

• On June 5, 1952, I left the United States for study and counsel in the field of rural missions in other lands. The trip covered six months and included India, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. I had previously served in this region for eighteen years, and it was a rare privilege to return to it after an absence of ten years.

One World

Much had happened during my absence. World War II had left its impacts, colonialism had collapsed and new governments were being formed. Missions were no longer "foreign." There was a growing sense of this being one world. When William Carey, eminent English missionary, scholar and horticulturist sailed to India it was a journey of six months. Today men shuttle back and forth by air in a matter of hours. The Korean farmer, the Indian weaver and the fellah of the Nile have become our neighbors in a world that is increasingly small.

The Church needs to view its work among rural people in those lands in the light of new and decisive factors. While the message of the Church remains one of service, redemption and hope, there are inescapable factors which impinge upon both method and policy at every turn. Some of these have moved to a position of central prominence in the post-war period. Others are new. We note several of these briefly.

Increased Human Suffering

Japan is trying to survive with a fourth less food than was her meager lot before the war. Korea had only 1452 food calories per person even before the recent tragedy there. India has suffered famine of major proportions for the last six years. Africa, once considered a country of abundant land, now faces the threat of famine in local areas as land erodes and population mounts. In Egypt the bondage of those who struggle for land appears more tragic than in the days of Pharaoh. In several lands the homeless are numbered in millions.

These people once accepted hunger and misery as the facts of life that could not be changed. Now there is a festering sense of injustice as oppressed people everywhere come to believe something can and must be done. Missionaries by their teaching of Christ's concern for all have helped to generate this noble and rising hope.

Awakened World Conscience

One of the encouraging developments of our time is the growing world concern for the well-being of under-privileged peoples. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Point IV Program and the British sponsored Colombo Plan are examples of this world concern. Missionaries who have long worked for the relief of poverty welcome these larger programs for social and economic help.

Growing National Loyalties

There was once a time when almost every field, hill and valley in the East where missions serve was controlled by the white man. As colonialism comes to an end new national loyalties arise. In a country like India, for example, the landless, the students and the welfare minded people become restive as the novelty of independence wears off and they see their age-old problems still acutely present. It is only natural that some long restrained resentment should be released as they remember the amounts of raw material moved westward during colonial days.

Missionaries have long been sensitive to the physical needs of the people they served. As early as 182-

Staff of the Agricultural Extension Department, Allahabad Agricultural Institute, India

illiam Carey took steps to found e Agri-Horticultural Society of dia "because the people's food was poor and their comforts so mea- r!" Working often with limited eans missionaries have developed ccessful projects in rural rehabili- tion and have accumulated experi- ce of world proportions in liter- y work, health, agriculture im- rovement and cooperatives. God as prospered their efforts, and to- ay there are nearly 90,000 churches nd Christian groups.

However, recent world events have id bare the need to express the Gos- el in still more tangible and con- ete ways. The Church in its min- try in areas of agrarian struggle ces the greatest challenge and the ost noble opportunity of its his- ory. We can only mention here sev- al points of increased emphasis.

lore Adequate Preparation

The average village pastor in lands ke India, Pakistan, or Egypt, must ow serve where the fierce tensions f land hunger, usury, unemploy- ent and the handfuls of grain eeded for survival are matters of rowing urgency. The pastor needs reparation and practical experience n order to help the people to work ut solutions to their problems of sur- ival. This calls for more adequate aining and the placing of greater ontent into the village ministry as vocation.

The people are reasonable in their emands: some land to cultivate, a lot on which to build a home, a air return for their labor, and food nd raiment for their children. We o not suggest that the Church alone responsible for the reconstruction eed, but there can be no doubt as o our Christian obligation at a time hen more people than ever before e bleeding on the Jericho road.

xtension Service

Christ won the lasting devotion of ural people because he identified imself directly with them and went the heart of their problems. Exten- ion service with the emphasis upon elf help, the resources the people lready have, and upon volunteer ay leadership is one of the most opeful doors open to the Church

The Village Pastor's Daughter feeds some of the young chickens which her father maintains as a means of supplying breeding stock to the people he serves.

in its service to village people. This will strengthen the Christian movement abroad at points where it is weak today.

Land Procurement

Wherever we go a little land to cultivate, a garden or a plot on which to build a home is one of the deepest longings of the people. Some missions have done a notable service in helping people to finance the purchase of land. We need to increase our attention to revolving loan funds, cooperative credit societies and indigenous forms of mutual self help.

Young People

I was impressed everywhere by the large number of wholesome and eager young people. But many are restive in the light of political and economic tensions. They must be given an opportunity to link constructive action with their faith. In almost every community there are useful tasks of improvement where young people can prove their civic pride and give tangible expression to their Christian faith.

Conferences, work camps and retreats are useful. But there is urgent need for mature and skilled youth leaders to guide young people in long-term efforts to improve life in the homes, in the fields and in the community. Young people are ready to enter the main stream of village life and give tangible expression to their faith.

The Church's Challenge

Life as Christ revealed it is a unity of mind, body and spirit. It is like a woven fabric. But often we take up only one fringe and try to reform it. The result is disappointment. The key to village improvement and stronger village churches lies in a dedicated working fellowship where the pastor, the extension worker and the people themselves join hands in efforts to live, strengthen and redeem all phases of life.

This is right. If there is to be real improvement in the level of living for oppressed people there must also be provided the ethical and spiritual climate in which improvements can occur. While the people need the materials to live with, there is also need in their changing world for a faith and hope to live by. With nearly half the people of the world struggling for a better way of life, the Church now faces the most sobering challenge and the noblest opportunity of its history.

They're Proud of Their Church

• The Christian Church of Colebrook, Illinois has "an unusual hold on the life of the farm community . . . it has huge crowds on Sundays and a busy program during the week," according to John Strohm in a recent issue of *Country Gentleman.* The congregation is mostly farmers and forty-five men run the church and make all important decisions. The minister of the church is Charles Willey who is also very much in demand "as a speaker for luncheon meetings and farm groups."

Mr. Strohm says of the four eastern townships of Warren County: "There are four country churches—of three different denominations. But they cooperate instead of competing, exchange ministers once a year. Together, they sponsor an adult education program which brings nationally known popular speakers to the community. . . . The church budget has gone from $4,000 to more than $15,000 in the past eight years, as church attendance and educational activities have steadily increased."

BOOK REVIEWS

The Mormon Village. By Lowry Nelson. University of Utah Press. 1952. $5.00.

For the outsider or "Gentile" reader, *The Mormon Village* is a fascinating book. It provides an insight into the structure of the Mormon religion and village settlement.

Mormons were unique in that while the separated farmstead dwelling early became the pattern for the general American migration westward, they settled deliberately in villages. Livestock was housed in the village and barns were built there, while the farmer commuted to his work in the fields. Today, livestock is more likely to be found out on the farm the year round and the barns and sheds have been moved out, but most farmers still live in villages.

The early chapters of the book survey agricultural settlement patterns and the origin of the Mormon village type. While he recognizes the influences of environmental factors and the instinctive need for communal association, Nelson argues for the thesis that the essential cause for the adoption of the village pattern was religious, specifically the need to prepare for the Second Coming of the Savior. It was Mormon belief that the City of Zion was to be built here in America and the "gathered" would be there when the Lord came. The Plat of the City of Zion was drawn up at the request of Joseph Smith and influenced the design of the Mormon villages wherever they were established. This movement, the author believes, was not unrelated to the widespread Utopian communitarian ventures and the millenarianism in the revivalism of the early 19th Century.

Chapters on the organization and leadership of the Mormon Church impressed this reader with the extensive and complete bureaucratization which has developed with an authoritarian pattern. A second impression is the tremendous amount of time given by Mormons to leadership in their church. Since Mormonism is a lay religion with no professional clergy, it has meant that leadership is primarily accepted by those who have achieved sufficient economic stability to be able to afford the time required. This, coupled with another Calvinist-related idea that economic success is an evidence of God's grace, has made good management in economic affairs an important value for aspiring Mormons.

The bulk of the book is given to case studies of six Mormon villages, three in Utah and three in western Canada, with an attempt to picture them before and after the changes in social and economic life which have come about in America since the early 1920's. Each village shows the influence of the type and extent of economic resources in its environment and the impact of change upon the religious structure. Where an adequate economic base is present, villages seem to be able to cope with change and where it is absent even the strong religious motivation has difficulty in maintaining a satisfactory community life. Particularly where conditions have made necessary extensive use of the Mormon system of relief-in-kind have social cleavages and resentment arisen.

There are only scattered references to the presence of non-Mormons in these villages.

This book, written by a mature and accomplished sociologist and professor at the University of Minnesota, is an excellent description of the adjustment which a theocratic organization has made to a growing secular order in government and economics over which it has little control. These are communities in which in the past the church has been the chief instrument for building the essentials of social life.

This reader, however, felt that he never really got to know the contemporary Mormon as a person, to see what makes him think and act as he does. The early pioneers are seen as courageous, inspired, and imaginative men. It would be helpful if some introductions could be arranged through individual case histories to the men who today are directing the destinies of these Mormon villages. How are the religious values today influencing Mormon behavior? Can they be made to support policies which are adequate for the diversified and highly industrialized society within which agriculture and small community life must function today?

—Edwin L. Becker

The Wonderful World of Books. Edited by Alfred Stefferud. Houghton Mifflin, New York, $2.00—clothbound edition; New American Library, New York, 35 cents—paperbound edition. 1953.

This book contains contributions at a Conference on Rural Reading held at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. To mark its publication, the Library of Congress held a reception which was attended by members of the Congress and the Senate, authors, publishers, heads of the sponsoring organizations and national leaders in the fields of library work, education and public service. Alfred Stefferud, editor of the book, who is also editor of the Department of Agriculture Yearbook, autographed almost 200 copies of the book for guests.

Typical of the kind of use *The Wonderful World of Books* will have in bringing the pleasures of reading to the attention of many who have not previously been book readers, is the Ohio Farm Bureau's Rural Reading Circle Plan. In Ohio, the Farm Bureau launched a new "farmer's book club" using the book as the first in a series of five books which will be distributed to farm families this year, accompanied with discussion guide material. Many libraries and adult education groups are patterning reading courses on the contents of *The Wonderful World of Books.*

Come to the Country. By Marie Wallace. The World Publishing Company, New York. 1953. $3.75.

In this book Marie Wallace glorifies rural living and humorously describes the pitfalls of building a house in the country. This is the story of "Balla Machree" (House-of-my-Heart) which Mr. and Mrs. Wallace built in "the Berkshires of Ohio" for summer vacations, holidays and odd times when they can get away from Cleveland, twenty-two miles

way. They plan to live there permanently when "Boss" retires.

This book is not only about "Balla Machree," which was featured in the well-known magazine, *Better Homes and Gardens*, but also about the fourteen acres which surround it —the gardens, pools, birds and views —about the two dogs, Tono and Mazie, about the neighbors, and about the many visitors from the city.

The Wallaces are rural-urban fringe people who love the "peace, health and happiness" they have found in the country. "Here there's time for thinking, time for living," Mrs. Wallace says.

—R. B. R.

A Community Looks at Itself. By Winifred Gilson, George R. Kailey, Shirley J. Kailey, Paul L. Leuenberger, and Gene B. Meier. Extension Division, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebr. 1952.

A Community Looks at Itself is the report of a survey made at Weeping Water, Nebraska, following up the Mid-Century White House Conference on Children and Youth.

The leaders of Nebraska felt that the White House Conference could be made more meaningful in that state if communities were provided with a guide for self-study of its services to children and youth and an example of a community where it was tried. So the Nebraska Council on Children and Youth requested the cooperation of the state university's graduate school of social work in developing a plan for community analysis. As a result, five of the school's research students spent several months working with the citizens of Weeping Water, a small community in the agricultural lands of southeastern Nebraska.

This is one of the better reports of self study. The methods are sound but simple, and could be used in any small community. The facilities are pictured in such a way as to give a new perspective. Recreation, family life, health, religion and education are considered in detail.

Churchmen will find this booklet helpful in raising standards, but many will be shocked at the rating of the church as a ministering agency.

—Don F. Pielstick

A Church-Centered Community

MARILYN GILBERTSON

• Conception, Minnesota, is a church-centered community. Immaculate Conception Catholic Church is located on top of a ridge, about half way between Plainview and Kellogg, Minn. In the center of a circle of high land about four miles in diameter, are the church and rectory and a store—the nucleus of the community.

In the area live about fifty-five families, some fifty of them Roman Catholic and members of Immaculate Conception. Nearly all the farms, about 160-acres in size, are operated by owners or are being bought by operators. Only one renter lives in the area. Most of the residents are of Irish and German extraction and are second-generation families.

Training Leaders

How is the country church the center of this family community and what part does it play in the lives of the residents?

A major responsibility of the church is to encourage young families to remain on the land, to become better farmers and to regard their occupation as the most noble of all, says the parish priest, the Rev. Leo Neudecker.

"The church is very much interested in the training of future farm leaders," he emphasizes. "I talk about the nobility of agriculture—of the sacredness of tilling the soil. I definitely encourage boys to go on after high school to study agriculture."

The priest deplores the fact that some of his parish people seem to feel themselves inadequate to certain tasks because they are farmers. "One of my parish women who edits a quarterly bulletin for a school group says to me, 'I don't know why I'm doing this—I'm only a farm housewife.' I ask her, 'Is there a finer occupation?' "

"These people are not rich farmers but they're better off than city people," Fr. Neudecker, himself city-born, firmly believes. Regarding his own role in the actual processes of farming, the cleric says, "Five years ago I didn't know a thing about farming but after some study of the subject, I know a little—enough to keep quiet when people are talking about it."

His "some study" is revealed in his collection of books—volumes on farming methods, on composts and on food and nutrition scattered among theological sources.

Cooperation

The priest encourages participation in cooperatives, credit unions, farm organizations such as the 4-H Club, the Farm Bureau, and the Soil Conservation Service programs. The parish sponsored twelve DP families, and participated in CROP. Fr. Neudecker was county CROP chairman.

"We're glad to have non-Catholics use our church basement for activities. Several persons have held their wedding showers there," the priest relates. Because of the isolated location of Conception, the residents do not spend a great many recreational hours in nearby towns. Men's, women's and youth groups serve the church members.

School

One of the most vital issues to the community and one on which the priest has taken a definite stand with his people is the problem of school reorganization. "We are very much opposed to the present reorganization program," Fr. Neudecker states. "Keeping rural schools open is tremendously important in maintaining a church in open country areas. . . . When school, social and recreational programs are urban-centered, energy is drained from the rural area and interest in its programs declines," he says.

Most of the Conception children go to Plainview Public School and Fr. Neudecker gives religious instruction through the released-time program.

Since Fr. Neudecker came to Conception five years ago a considerable repair program has been under way —shingling of the roof, repointing of

bricks and building new steps at $5,500 this year; installing a boiler at $3,500 and building a back shelter at $2,000 last year. The entire cost falls on the fifty families, which support an average budget of from $4,000 to $8,000.

Although repair programs necessitate heavy financial contributions from each family, and farm work often prevents them from taking an active part in church organizations, there is a spirit of forward movement felt in the parish as the residents accept their problems and work together to make theirs a leading farm and religious community.

American International Association

• The American International Association for Economic and Social Development has published a report summarizing operations over six years. The Association, which is located at 45 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y., was formed "with the purpose of assisting in the development of the underdeveloped areas of the world." It has been testing, in cooperation with two state governments in Brazil and the federal government in Venezuela, certain of the techniques used in the Farm Security Administration of the United States, now the Farmers Home Administration. "The work is with farm families, with emphasis on such problems as farm-to-market roads, community centers, health and sanitation, and widespread nutrition education."

During the six years, 1946-51 inclusive, some $3,800,000 has been expended, almost evenly divided between the AIA and the governments of the two cooperating countries. "The Association is financed by contributions from members of the Rockefeller family, and in Venezuela by the Creole Petroleum Corporation, the Socony Vacuum Oil Company, Inc., and in Brazil, from the Refinacoes de Milho, a subsidiary of the Corn Products Refining Corporation."

Meditation

The sleeping world is calm and free
When moonlight glimmers o'er the lea.
Our hearts are warm with love and prayer,
Our Father listens everywhere.

The thinking world will find the truth
That makes men free, inspiring youth,
With bright sure faith we pioneer,
A peaceful world shall yet appear.

The hungry world, enslaved and bare,
Cries out for human hearts to spare
The surplus of blest freedom's lands
And loving service of men's hands.

The wonder world unknown to fear
Lies not beyond the stratosphere,
The greatest world that e'er can be
Hides still in hearts of you and me.

—George Frederick Wells

Church Trust Fund

• Richard Waterman, a prosperous farmer back in the 1830's, feared that there might not always be enough people living in Coventry, R. I., to support a church. When he died he left $500 in trust to "pay a minister to preach two Sundays a month," according to the *New York Herald Tribune.*

In the 116 years since his death the $500 has grown to a little over $100,000. Today the church is served by the Rev. Byron O. Waterman, great-great- grandson of the man who established the trust.

The Saintly George Herbert

• A recent issue of *The Church of England Newspaper* featured a study of the standards set by George Herbert. The article was written by E. W. Martin and entitled, "The Vocation of a Country Parson."

"The parson must have an all-seeing eye; he must possess humility, knowledge, charity, hope, patience."

Appreciation of the Soil

• O Lord, Thou creator of all, who didst make the land and who hast bid us cultivate and keep it, we praise thee for this precious gift. We acknowledge with thankfulness that thou hast endowed it with power to sustain our families, our communities, our nation and our world; that all that has life and breath lives by it; and that all human achievement rests upon it.

As we remember the richness of this gift, make constant our will to cultivate and preserve the soil; inspire our skills for retaining its productive power; and grant us the long view which sees our children and our children's children living happily on it. Thus, O God, may the world reap the harvest of a wiser and more godly race obedient to thy commandments. In Jesus' name *Amen.*

—Mark Rich

Women are Farm Operators

• Many women have found successful careers on the land. A recent issue of *Soil Conservation* tells about some who "have wiped out indebtedness and paid off farms, and supported and educated children." A few successful women farmers in the northeastern states were cited: Dot Lassen, Cheshire, Conn.; Anne B. MacLaren, Durham, Conn.; Ruth Trost Welles, Coventry, Conn.; Mary B. Carnes, Glenwood, N. Y.; Genevieve Reddish, Delmar, Md.; Evalyn Gatchell, Alton, N. Y.; and Helen Eaton and Louise Starr, co-partners at Cassadaga, N. Y., raising birdsfoot trefoil seed on a 500-acre farm.

In-Service Training at Phillips

• Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma, will hold an institute for rural ministers, July 6-31. Courses to be taught are "The Rural Ministry" and "Rural Life Values." Graduate students may earn four semester hours of credit.